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TAGS: [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [PHUM](#) [FR](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: FRENCH DISCUSS UN REFORM ISSUES WITH NEWT GINGRICH

REF: STATE 85180

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alex Wolff for reason 1.4 (b/d).

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Former House Speaker Gingrich's May 31-June 1 visit to France, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the U.S. Institute for Peace's Task Force on the UN, offered an opportunity for GOF officials to provide views on UN reform issues. On the issue of Security Council enlargement, the French indicated clear support for the G4 countries along with additional increases in both the Council's permanent (including a seat for Africa) and non-permanent membership. The French expressed general support for other necessary UN reforms and emphasized the importance of development assistance as a UN activity. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich visited Paris May 31-June 1 as Co-Chair of the United States Institute for Peace's (USIP) Task Force on the United Nations (reftel), meeting with Foreign Minister Barnier, MFA A/S-equivalent for IO Affairs Jean-Maurice Ripert, and members of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee (chaired by former PM Edouard Balladur). USIP Staff Member Heather Sensibaugh and Embassy notetakers attended the three meetings, with Callista Gingrich attending the Ripert and National Assembly sessions and Charge Wolff participating in the Barnier meeting.

Meeting with FM Barnier (June 1)

[13.](#) (C) FM Barnier opened the meeting by noting that the government was in a state of suspension while awaiting news of the cabinet reshuffle. (NOTE: Barnier himself was subsequently replaced soon after the meeting with Gingrich by new FM Douste-Blazy. END NOTE.) The May 29 French rejection of the EU Constitution was detrimental to both the capacity of the EU and the credibility of France, he said. Barnier predicted that the satisfaction of the "no" camp would be short-lived. Gingrich noted that the Bush administration's reaction to the "no" vote had been subdued. He predicted that it would be more difficult and time-consuming to work with a divided EU.

[14.](#) (C) Addressing the Secretary-General's report on UN reform, Barnier praised the effort. He expressed his belief that the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) was useful but not strong enough, and suggested strengthening UNEP along the lines of the WHO.

[15.](#) (C) On enlarging the Security Council, Gingrich remarked that the U.S. was passionate about Japan's receiving a seat, noting that the USG would likely oppose any enlargement plan that did not include Japan. He expressed his personal view that including India in an enlarged Security Council would also be necessary. Gingrich explained that the USG would be comfortable with a larger Council able to exert greater influence when it was able to reach a decision, but was concerned that decision-making would be more difficult. Gingrich said that, although the administration might not say so, the USG was not excited about Germany's candidacy and could not see the EU, especially after the rejection of the Constitution in France and perhaps elsewhere in the future, with its own seat and veto power.

[16.](#) (C) Barnier responded that the EU needed a to develop a common policy first. He used Yugoslavia as an example from the recent past of Europe's inability to agree on common action and the consequent need for U.S. engagement. Barnier acknowledged that Japan and India likely merited permanent seats, and suggested that an African country and Brazil were worthy additions as well. (NOTE: Barnier did not/not mention Germany when listing countries worthy of consideration. END NOTE.) Gingrich expressed concern that the Spanish-speaking majority of Latin America might resent a seat accorded to a Portuguese-speaking country (Brazil).

[17.](#) (C) On the European Union, Gingrich stated that the USG should pay more attention to Brussels. He had advised Secretary Rice that high-level U.S. officials should visit

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Europe more frequently to meet with EU counterparts. Barnier agreed, and said that EU Commissioners should likewise travel to the U.S. Brussels was vital as a place to pool European resources, Barnier noted, and the USG should better understand it.

18. (C) Barnier stated the need to increase support to developing nations, noting that poverty produced frustration, that in turn fueled terrorism. Gingrich responded that terrorists were often well-educated and that the problem did not seem directly linked to development. He further commented that in many areas, establishing stability and security was necessary before development could take place, citing Haiti as an example. A government's behavior should also be taken into account in deciding on development assistance. Gingrich stated that the USG had increased its development assistance but had received little recognition for doing so. He said that the USG would accept the 0.7 percent target figure if both private and government funds were considered as a whole, but would not be favorable to a formula that included only government contributions. Gingrich emphasized that the notion of an "international development tax" would likewise meet with little favor in the U.S.

Meeting with MFA IO Bureau (May 31)

19. (C) Gingrich told A/S-equivalent Ripert that USIP had been tasked by Congress to create a Task Force, which he co-chaired, on UN reform. He regretted that former Senator and Task Force Co-Chair George Mitchell had been unable to travel after sustaining an injury to his arm. Gingrich said that he had come to listen and asked how France saw the issue of UN reform.

110. (C) Ripert replied that there had been several recent reports on UN reform, including by a number of experts, by Jeffrey Sachs, and by UNSYG Annan himself in preparation for the High Level Event in September which, he hoped, would lead to a declaration adopted by consensus. Ripert described the process as complicated, with drafting being done on the basis of work by current UNGA President Jean Ping and representatives of the SYG touring the world to solicit views. "We are in the middle of the process," Ripert said, adding that the final outcome was unknown.

111. (C) For France, Ripert continued, UN reform was very important. France believed in the need for a strong UN, especially to address peace and security issues. Ripert noted that despite problems, the UNSC had not failed. However, there was a need for reform in order to transform UN institutions. Some work had begun on reform of DPKO, the UN Secretariat, and revitalization of UNGA. There was agreement

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among the Geneva group to streamline UN bodies to create efficiency and savings and to better implement their mandates.

112. (C) On Security Council reform, Ripert said that the Council should be enlarged with respect to both permanent and non-permanent members. The Council had to be efficient and able to respond to international crises, but also needed more legitimacy by adding countries representing other regions and emerging powers. France was committed to supporting the G4 (Japan, Germany, India and Brazil) as well as one or two African countries, probably including South Africa, for permanent membership. France also supported adding additional non-permanent members. Ripert said that France wanted the enlargement to respect the existing P5 prerogatives, adding that P5 veto rights would not be questioned.

113. (C) Ripert acknowledged that an increase from 15 to 25 UNSC members was "too much" for the USG, but stressed that a group of 25, with 11 permanent members, would have a legitimacy that could not be questioned. Ripert continued that enlargement was not enough; the Council would also have to change its practices and reach out to non-members. The difference between permanent and non-permanent members was too great, he said.

114. (C) Ripert said that France favored the establishment of a peacebuilding commission to enable the UN to deal with crises as they arose and to avoid having to return to countries, as had been done in Liberia and Haiti. Ripert addressed the emerging importance of human rights and humanitarian issues. Citing the example of Darfur, Ripert stated that the crisis there was humanitarian rather than a peace and security issue. These types of crises, he said, were very difficult. Clearly the UN could not intervene "every five minutes." Action against states committing human rights or humanitarian abuses might also be vetoed by some UNSC members. Ripert said that on a voluntary basis, France was prepared not to veto resolutions on genocide and war crimes, something which would be difficult for some (e.g., Russia with respect to Kosovo).

115. (C) Ripert said that the September High Level Event should focus on the Millennium Development Goals and not be overshadowed by reform issues. He acknowledged the difference with the USG over the 0.7 per cent of GDP target for development assistance and the proposal for a small tax

on air tickets. Gingrich interjected that the proposed air ticket levy would provoke an extremely negative reaction in the U.S.

16. (C) Ripert concluded that the basis of UN reform should be to create order and common rules. ECOSOC, he said was not functioning well, describing it as a "joke." Ripert envisioned a grouping, including the G8, WTO, UN, IFIs, OECD, and about 20 emerging and less developed nations, meeting in a group of about 35 at the political director level. Gingrich replied that there were three parts of the world which were not developing: the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America (which had spells of growth, followed by decline). He said that Ripert's vision was fine, but that the group would have to be tough minded in addressing why these regions were failing. Otherwise, it would become a talking shop demanding the transfer of wealth.

17. (C) Ripert said that France also favored a universal UN environmental organization to address issues currently dealt with by 500 conventions and autonomous secretariats all over the world. He envisioned an environmental body similar to WIPO, having a small secretariat. Gingrich said that this was a good idea and that he would be interested in hearing more on France's thoughts in this regard.

18. (C) On the CHR, Ripert said that human rights was the core business of the UN. Human rights violations had an effect on peace and security. While France agreed with the U.S. that the CHR was not working, France did not share our view on the solution. Ripert said that there were no universally shared values, and thus there should be an inclusive approach which did not exclude those who did not completely share western values. Ripert said that a UN human rights body should be linked to the UNGA.

19. (C) MFA Strategic Affairs Director Carre stated that the UN remained relevant, and that he was encouraged that the UN was addressing the challenges of proliferation and terrorism. He noted that on proliferation issues, the debate had taken on a North/South flavor with some viewing the arms control conventions as being imposed by the North on the South. While there was a growing awareness that WMD were not legitimate for defensive purposes, he anticipated a long fight on this issue. On terrorism, he was encouraged by a recent UN panel report. Noting the desire by some, specifically the Palestinians, to exclude "freedom fighters," Carre said that he hoped that the principle that violence was not legitimate in any circumstances would be extended beyond states to non-state actors. It would be very important, he said, if the High Level Event could agree that the use of force against civilians was not condoned.

20. (C) On UNSC reform, Gingrich said that his personal view was that, in addition to Japan, India should become a permanent member. He was dubious about Germany and Brazil. Gingrich said that the Oil-For-Food program, sexual misconduct by peacekeepers, and the failure to protect civilians in Srebrenica had contributed to the climate of outrage regarding the UN in some quarters in the U.S., including among those who were not habitually anti-UN, but who were outraged at the UN's poor performance. On OFF, Ripert noted that France had opened its files to the Volcker commission, which had extended its stay in Paris from two days to a week. No other P5 country had done so, he commented.

Meeting at National Assembly (June 1)

21. (C) Former PM Balladur, chairman of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, led a group of Committee members in the discussion with Gingrich. After explaining the composition and mandate of the USIP Task Force, Gingrich noted that the UN played an important global role, but required important and major reforms. He acknowledged that some changes in the Security Council were probably necessary, but that it was essential that the Council become more effective and avoid the kinds of problems plaguing the General Assembly. Gingrich emphasized that it was essential that the UN be able to respond quickly when criminal regimes violated rights and killed people. When possible, the Security Council should act against these regimes, but when not possible, regional or ad hoc coalitions should be formed and allowed to operate so as to avoid situations where "innocents die as the Council talks." Balladur stressed that the main question was the UN's role in peacekeeping. If this role were acknowledged, he continued, then it was clear that this was an issue for the Security Council, not the General Assembly. Balladur believed that problems arose when the UNSC could not or would not get involved in a crisis. He questioned the circumstances in which states or regional coalitions could intervene independently, citing the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

22. (C) Gingrich indicated that the Monterrey agreement on development issues had moved towards recognizing that poor

countries must meet certain conditions before receiving assistance. He also stressed that the 0.7 per cent target figure for development assistance should include non-government contributions, as voluntary resources in addition to those given by a government were a better measure of a country's actual contribution.

¶23. (C) Further explaining the Task Force's position on Security Council enlargement, Gingrich noted that France's rejection of the EU Constitution rendered moot any talk of an EU seat in the near term and might also weaken Germany's case for a seat. As the UN's second largest contributor and the world's second largest economy, Japan must have representation in some form, Gingrich noted, stressing that the USG would likely not accept enlargement that excluded Japan. Gingrich questioned whether a third European country merited a permanent seat, and whether it was appropriate for Brazil, as a Portuguese-speaking country, to represent largely Spanish-speaking Latin America. He commented that countries possessing vetoes were hesitant to share this power, and asked if the French supported veto power for new permanent members. Balladur emphasized that France supported enlarging the Security Council to reflect the realities of the modern world, and stated that the issue was whether new permanent members could be viewed as true permanent members if they did not have veto power. Expressing his personal, Balladur believed that new members should have the veto, which would validate their status as real "permanent members."

¶24. (U) The USIP delegation has not had an opportunity to clear this message.
WOLFF